



*Aubade
Spring 2009*

“always

it’s

Spring)and everyone’s
in love and flowers pick themselves”

e.e. cummings - “who knows if the moon’s”

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AUBADE

2009

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Mission Statement

The Aubade is the University of Mary Washington's annual review of art and literature. We seek to showcase the best of what the artistic community at UMW has to offer. All submissions are judged anonymously by the reading staff and editors of the Aubade.

Submissions should be sent to
aubadeumw@gmail.com.

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Winners of the 2009 Aubade awards for outstanding contributions

ARTWORK

Clarissa Gotsch, Castle Carnival
(Cover art)

POETRY

Bradleigh Efford, For this train—

PROSE

Elizabeth Bodi, This is Side B

AFSOUS

Dear God

Dear God, dear world, dear listener in the night, dear ticking clock, dear everything near and dear, i ramble at 3 am. you would too, if you attempted coherent thoughts--sentences, ideas, expressions beyond snoring and dreams--3 am. apparently this is the hour. the hour that the whole night waits for. the trees are silent, as silent as trees will ever be, and there are whispers in the house. whispers of what? of yesterday, of tomorrow, of ages ago, of ages to come, of children, of past children, and of future grandchildren. parents to the era approaching at dawn--ear. lend me your ear. or perhaps, better your soul, for i have misplaced mine somewhere between the front door of the mosque and the rocking dance floor where a twenty something caught my two searching eyes. oops. but i ramble. i rumble, rumble, rumble. i grumble, at my parents, at my ticking clock, at my wide eyes. grumble, grumble, grumble--i grumble at God. Dear God, Allah, Lord, are you really out there? if you are, and you hear my thoughts, for i am told you do, perhaps you might also hear my prayer. Please end the wars, the pain, the suffering, end the injustices, the cruelties, and the subordinations. Don't allow this generation to wallow in disbelief at your existence because the world is breaking--super glue would deem especially worthy and necessary at the present moment. Fix the pieces of earth so signs of MAKE LOVE not WAR do not parade down crowded streets in hands of powerless, hopeful marchers. 3 am. and my eyes stay open. how many 3 ams have passed while i slept, unaware of the ramblings my mind might communicate had i stayed awake? are any of us really awake? 3 am. the call for morning prayer will ring in two hours and i will sleep through it. It. It is three am. and my ramblings are effortless in my effort to sleep.

Shirin Afsous

Midnight Walk

BODI

The streetlamps are burnt out like cavities,
lining the road like dinner utensils.
Beyond the dead buzz of lampposts, bleached
stars costume the sky like jewelry – round cut,
princess, marquise, pear – brilliant tiaras
littering black vinyl space. I am walking
through velvet, through dense coal
mines without a canary or crumbs to carry
me home. My insomnia follows
just two steps behind, his shadow blending
into the mouth of the night, encouraging me
to dance with his skeleton. My pupils,
fully dilated like the open mouths
of loaded cannons, guide me farther
down scorched paths full of tripping
cobblestones, dragon-scale-like and
opalescent.

The tiniest flames of fire trickle down
from a spiced moon hanging like a pearl
earring from the lobe of the sky, giving
just enough light to see behind
for a moment. My insomnia is lagging
four steps now, trying to find me
in the dark. His bones rustle like
the leaves under my feet pricking
their needles into my pores, their
stems through the spaces between
my bare toes. My cannon-eyes feel
gravity now, a moon-tide magnetism
compelling me backwards, past
the waltzing bones. Heat and wakefulness
begin to escape like smoke from loosed lips,
wisps of fog ready to sink ocean liners,
tugging me back to wade again through

BODI

scales and sugar-sores, through coal
midnight, hooded-cloaked and
onyx-polished.

Elizabeth Bodi

This is Side B

I found one of those self-help cassette tapes in my parents' attic once. The ones where a soothing, yet commanding disembodied voice tells you how to fix your life. my mother denied it was hers, blamed it on my father. And vice versa. I pocketed it instead of throwing it out, along with the dozens of packets of unused plant seeds I was assigned to sort. Beefsteak tomatoes. Bush crop cucumbers. Heavenly blue morning glories. Merlot wine gladiolas. The garden has always been empty.

I dropped the tape onto the passenger seat of my car. A car so useless, I can't even remember its model or year, only that I bought it because it was the same shade of cayenne-pepper-red as my fingernails at the time. Old enough, though, that there was only a cassette player and a radio. I don't remember the title of the self-help tape and I've put in the B-side, so I missed the introduction. But the perfectly enunciated male tells me that all the tools I need to live a fine and fulfilling life are actually within me at this very moment – I just never realized.

You know your luck's run out when the tape eject button on your car dash finally mal-functions and you're left with decades-old platitudes permanently scarred into your vehicle.

The Key To Happiness Is As Easy As A Healthy Attitude.

Now, if there's nothing on the radio, narrator Dallas Dodge lulls me into a near-catastrophic stupor as I drive to the grocery store. Dallas Dodge, whose only psychological training has been years of watching people from his apartment balcony. Who knows the pain I suffer. Who apparently knows that I am in desperate need of his guidance. He tells me how to adjust my attitude so that I can wear my ambitions on my sleeve. How to find true self-knowledge on my life's incredible journey. How to transcend expectations foisted onto me by others. How to let go of control and embrace flexibility and compassion.

The Key To (un)Reality Is Sugar And Spice.

I drove a coworker home once but forgot to turn on the radio. Once she heard the dulcet tones of Dallas Dodge, it was too late to change it. Now she thinks I have self-esteem issues and every morning proceeds to compliment me on anything. Nice shoes, they match your outfit. Love the hair, the sheen brings out your eyes. Great work on that presentation yesterday, no one noticed your hands shake. That memo you sent out was really helpful, even if it did contain numerous grammatical errors. But who's counting?

The Key To Avoiding Confrontation Is A Blank Stare And Repeated Bobble-Headed Nods.

Out of probable pity, she invited me to a housewarming party. I'm assuming she and her husband had moved recently – she never did clarify. I don't know what drove me to go. I brought them a potted plant, with a plastic bow on top, because I think that's what you're supposed to do. The man at the hardware store had suggested a dwarf umbrella tree. At the party, I watched balding, beer-bellied men outstretch their arms and reach unsuccessfully at the air, like lost children groping their way through a haunted house. Women, desperately trying to pry off wedding rings with too short skirts and their third martini. All of them rhythmically spasming to synthetic beats, in a bitter frenzy to get closer, closer. But the space is impenetrable. No matter how close you get, no matter the friction, there are spaces big enough for the atoms to slide, to collide, to slip between. Distance is inevitable and permanent.

The Key To Proper Socialization Is Just The Right Amount Of Cleavage.

In my imagination, Dallas Dodge is nothing but an overzealous salesman, like the ones that hock twelve separate household products on TV infomercials that play only late at night. Insomnia keeping you awake? How about a set of stainless steel, never-dulling steak knives? An exercise bike? A superabsorbent, tear-resistant, multi-purpose towel? The man behind the curtain of all of these is the same. Dallas Dodge has books on tape for any possible scenario: How To Heal Yourself Through Cautious Attentiveness. How To Achieve A Life Beyond Your Dreams. How To Raise Your Children Without Losing Yourself. How To Tunnel Your Way Out Of Prison Using Only A Plastic Spoon And A Rubberband. How To Whittle Yourself A Miniature Pony Out Of Cedar Wood. Etcetera, Etcetera. Dallas Dodge must be a millionaire.

The Key To Success Is To Know How To Market Yourself.

When my coworker asked me what I thought of her party the Monday after, I lied and told her it was a blast. Now she asks me to dinner every so often. A girls' night, she says. Time to catch up and be gossipy and giggly, like at slumber parties. The last time I had a slumber party, a girl ended up crying and slept leaning against the front door. Ten years old and I already knew the claustrophobia of attention. Already knew that such gatherings were useless. You can't have that many people in one place and expect all egos to be in check.

You spend a lifetime waiting for the right people. The human beings that don't grate your nerves. The ones that you can sit next to in silence, without awkwardness or frantically searching for words to fill the void, the space. The ones you find to move between the atoms and take up just the tiniest part of that in-between empty. The ones whose molecules slide smoothly along with yours in the atmosphere without friction, without bruising abrasions. The ones Dallas Dodge tells you are all around you, but you know he is lying because anything worth having is never as simple as dreaming it into existence.

The Key To Conquering Loneliness Cannot Be Purchased At Your Local Bookstore For \$11.99, Plus Tax.

My cayenne-pepper car must hate me for the acrid taste of Dallas Dodge on its tongue. The buzzing of his affable, steel-edged voice, with only the slightest hint of condescension. He can't be spit out though. If I'm lucky, the radio will continue to work. But still I come back to Dallas Dodge occasionally. It's like a scabbed-over cut – you can't help but pick at it because it itches, and when you do, all you've done is reopen the skin and now you're bleeding again. Dallas Dodge, you are my scab, my hard coating, my incrustation that forms over a wound during healing.

The Key To Overcoming More Of Life's Limitations Is Not Purchasing The Next Installment of Dallas Dodge's Best-Selling Series.

The Key To Contentment Is More Than What Is Contained On Side B. On Sides A Through Z. On Supplements One, Two, And Three.

Etcetera, Etcetera.

Elizabeth Bodi

EFFORD

For this train—

suspended from a great barrel
with a serenity, the violence
of a bullet & just as loaded,
the Potomac preening
mirrored in the arcing sun,
& great boughs of nameless trees
hang limp & waving
 over the water.

On the banks of Delaware's
fetid lakes, snow collects
in sheeted ice by the thin
tide's motion & just as it is pushed
onshore I pass speeding,
the train heading for a harbor
& me wanting more motion, constant,
 each afraid to strike
 the fetid lakes, the sheeted ice.

In New Jersey there is art
on the walls of closed school houses
& seven inches of day-old snow.
I am nodding restless on the thick
cold window when the sun catches
New York City in a blistering net
&, reflecting off the skyscrapers
tearing hemorrhages into the afternoon,
breaks open my eyes with meaning,
transfixed forever on my face,

EFFORD

my broken lips, my scalp & hair,
sharpening all but the empty seat
 next to me, breaking breathless,
 more breathless than me with one lung
struck swooning & awake, fighting
with golden & shielding my eyes.

Bradleigh Efford

EFFORD

For reasons I cannot have a cat.

She channels Odetta past eleven
at night when every pinhole
in the sky is patched with black,
& every word is a punchline.

Each time she laughs she tears
a cavern between her nose & chin
& with her palm pulls across blank tape.
She says we cannot have a cat,
or push the bookshelves back
just a little further into the wall;

she is not worth a poem, but if
she were, this would be the only one.

Bradleigh Efford

The earth does not grieve

motionless;

when we are but bound by backwards sorrow and backyard feasts of raw oysters.

forever;

when we are buried here eternal; a reason to find one another again.

burdened;

when we are not giants among men, but titans – marked as mourners by our Atlas shoulders sewn of tendon and worn to bone by the weight of our sorrow.

empty;

when we are trying to fill this new hollow in our ribs. It aches deep in our chests like our organs and bones do not forgive us; like there is newly formed skin to hide the mistakes we have made and the regrets we choose not to feel.

silent;

when we are unable to even whisper her name in quiet rooms for fear that she might answer, or worse, that everything would be as quiet as before we spoke. We try to keep our voices down and feel our throats constrict like choking; our muscles intent on disobeying our orders. We breathe like breathing is not for life but for death, a noisy announcement that we are living, like bragging.

Leslie Fannon

FANNON

Kinim (Exodus 8:16-19)

The grass in our backyard is dead.

The gnats swip and swarm
behind the shed, over the dying
flowers, fell from trees. I am
cross-legged on the concrete,
tiny pebble tattoos in my skin
because you told me to git. I've got
a constellation right here, in my
spring-pale skin, no need for night
skies – Ursa Minor crosses my knees
and Orion hunts on my shin. I stay low
to the ground, away from the bugs,
recently sprout from their stagnant nurseries. If
I were to

go run around or something
like you screamed with your back
to me, stance for sparring,
I would, first
hold a funeral for our grass and say
a prayer for all the ancestor lawns
that have come before us.
I would spread my arms
in a litany to the birds, and crouch
at the ready. I would sprint
over the blades of grass, with mouth
open wide, and capture the gnats
between my teeth, prison them under my tongue.
They would crawl over my gums
and beat against my lips, panicked.
And then I would creep back
into the house, careful not to slam
the screen door and maybe you would

notice, when unhinging my jaw I release
them, to swarm between the two of you,
stopping your argument mid-insult.

No, I am still sitting on the cool
concrete, picking the pebbles from my legs
and the weeds that grow where we cannot.

Leslie Fannon

NEWNAM

Casting On

I am knitting
you into the clouds
to take you with me
because I can't bear to
pack you up next to
Kerouac and socks
or to place you in the trunk
of my car. I need you
where I can see you
even if space keeps us
from weaving fingers.
I make sure each stitch
is tightly secured because
I am still afraid something
will unravel until I am left
with nothing but frays
that refuse to stay together
no matter how you
burn them.

I want to make
something out of this
thread you've got me
hanging by. I want to needle
over and under and through
until we are intertwined

Chelsea Newnam

Cut

Today
I sliced the tip
of my finger on the edge
of an envelope addressed
to you, and though no blood
emerged slipping slowly
down bone and skin
and wrinkle toward
the nub of my knuckle,
there is enough of a wound
to frustrate when I'm spicing
and sautéing and when I lather
rinse and repeat,
but not enough to leave
a scar.

Chelsea Newnam

NEWNAM

Why burning my bra in 1968 is worth more than your six-figure paycheck

It is because I can be planted and watered and grow
and you await steel and nuts and bolts

because I emerge pink and open from the ground
and you shovel and force your way in

because I am hue and pigment and radiance
and you are tall and stiff and colorless

because I weave myself into wreathes and wedding vows
and you blow smoke into corners and crevices

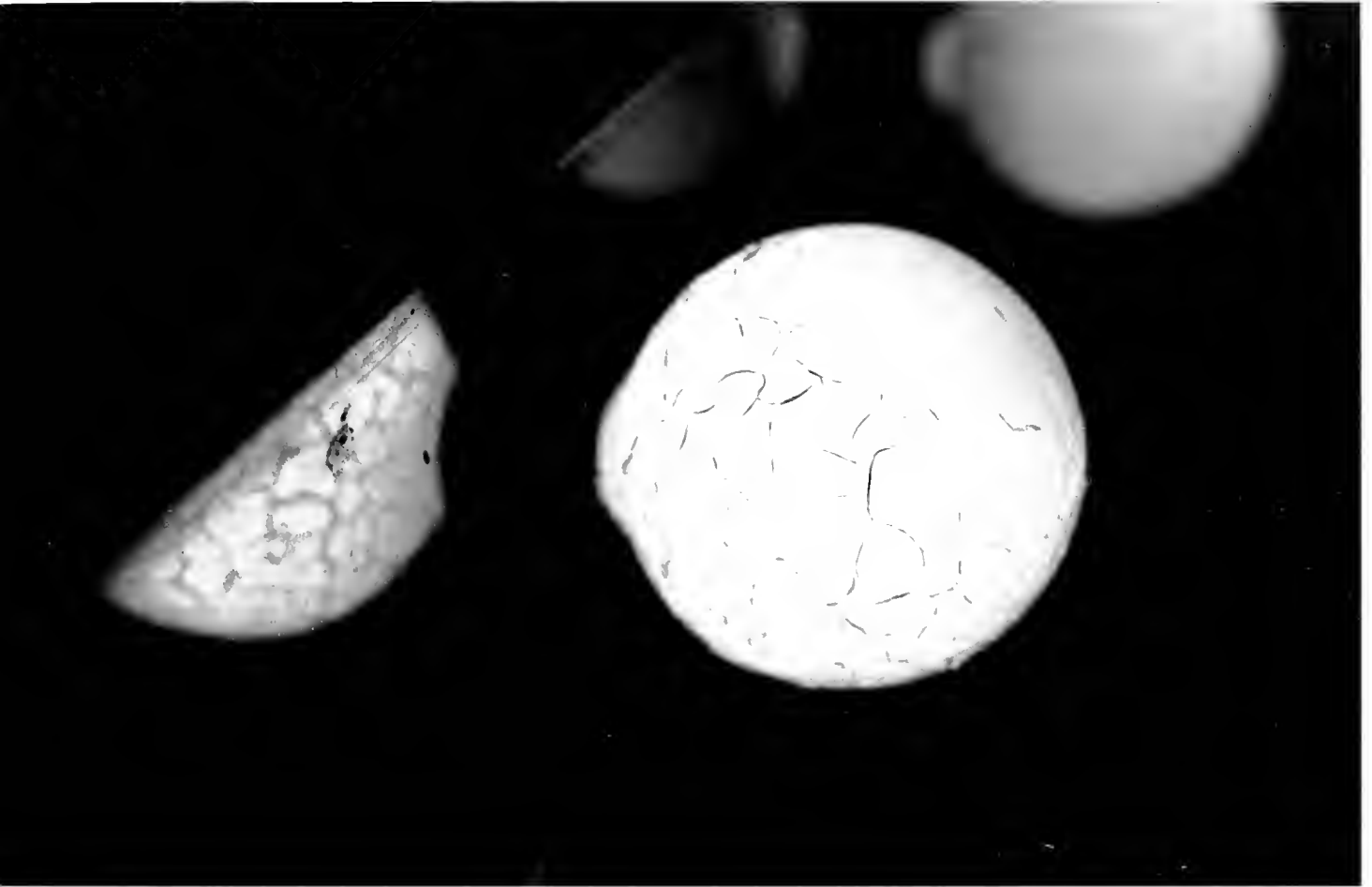
because I am perfumed and soft and delicate
and you leak oil through brick and concrete

because I comfort and rejuvenate and heal
and you boast of your levels and height

But mostly,
it is because I will come back year after year
and you will eventually rust and crumble.

Chelsea Newnam

MATHUSA



Cracked
Molly Mathusa

Longbottom

Franklin St.

Remember when I came on the weekends,
lying on that god awful dog bed
(I'm telling you, it's part of a chair)
listening to your wise astronomy
of the patterns in the popcorn ceiling
(The squirrel's my favorite)
which you carefully marked with post-it notes
that fall on your face as you sleep.

Then in the middle of the night
you would act as trail guide,
keeping me from stumbling over the empty
and broken liquor bottles
(28 and counting, it's a record)
onto stairs barely wide enough for one person
(Remember to skip the fourth step, it's not nailed on anymore)
on our pilgrimage to 7-11.

Then coming back to lean against the walls,
mindlessly peeling the paint away with your nail
to find the pencil sketches underneath
(Art students lived here before you know)
like some urban archeology.
The weekend would end and
I would try to leave and close the door on
that last inch it seemed to loathe.

Erin Longbottom



London Eye
Dabash Negash

NEGASH

Last Ethiopian Car Ride

I'm resting my head against her small shoulder
to keep from meeting eyes in the blackish blue tide
of the night; Hot Addis air seems colder
today. I can feel her lukewarm tears slide
their way onto my cheek, following the flow
of my own. While the tired Toyota trucks
through the broken cement biscuits to tow
me away from the city, I try to rub my chucks
together hard enough, so the squeaks drown
out my uncontrollable gasps. Feeling
my shakiness, she turns to me with a frown.
“Eyezosh”, she says with a firm voice, sealing
her arms around me. But it's not OK.
Still, I'm silent, as I watch the heavy sky grey.

Dabash Negash

Cow Skull On A Wall

It came from across the river, where their sounds float across the dull brown
and answer our screams and screendoor slams
with nervous neighs and shy lowings of brown-eyed cows.

We see the eyes of their cars carve the curves of the road in darkness across the river.
We see their tractor, toy-like at a distance and guess
at what it does from behind their fence of trees.

They see our aluminum rowboat, the nylon ropeswing that strangles our tree
and cuts soft city palms slipping free toward the water
in a confusion of skinny limbs and afternoon sun.

When the dam gave up, and let the river run miles away downstream, he tripped across
in barefeet, soles cupping the riverclams' backs,
trusting in their algae coats and silt beds

For a speck of white we saw from our side
and a skull on theirs;

A wide-eyed, white-washed mask with tapered nose of lacy sharpness
whose river-watered brains spilled
on his foot when he coaxed it from their bank.

It came from across the river, where we float when we need to see
specks of white up close.

Johannah O'Keefe

BOWER



Game Warden
Ben Bower

The Dam

We lie in golden oblivion,
water from the dam seeps from us,
spreads in icy opposition
to sun soaked sandstone
and stains a deeper gray.
We laze like pale lizards in this
sepia panorama of afternoon sun,
flinch at the spray from the ribbon
of waterfall brushed across by breeze,
ease our way back into the deep,
feel the blood slow in our veins,
churn the dark
and watch a chaos of droplets
catch the light and sharpen it into memory.

Johannah O'Keefe

BOCCUTI

Namazu

I once read about a Japanese scientist who believed the way people talked to water influenced its crystallization when it eventually froze – the nicer the words, the more beautiful the crystals. His name was Dr. Emoto and, to be honest, the guy seemed like a quack. Still, ever since reading the article, I try to think of pleasant things when I'm near water. I figure it can't hurt. *Warm rain. Piecrust. Fresh sheets.* I leaned on my armrest to get a better view of the river we were passing over.

"Next stop is Wilmington. Wilmington, Delaware. If Wilmington is your stop please gather your belongings and prepare to exit at the end of your car where an Amtrak employee is waiting to assist you."

The girl next to me shifted. She had been asleep against the window, and effectively squandering the view, for at least an hour. I was hoping Wilmington was her stop so I could take her seat. She opened her backpack, a Jansport splashed with magenta hibiscus flowers. Around Cornwell Heights I had taken to contemplating the monogram, KCW, embroidered on the front pocket of the bag. After trying a few different combinations, I settled on Katie Claire Warner for its generic, suburban feel. A Katie Claire would own that sort of backpack. She reached for an empty Ziploc lying next to my shoe. Only a few crumbs remained in the baggie. She had polished off the cookies, one by one, within three stops, each time resealing the baggie and stuffing it into her backpack, only to retrieve it a few minutes later. I wondered if the Ziploc ritual was born out of self-consciousness of her round stomach. I noticed her stomach mostly because she kept tugging on her sweatshirt and then balling her fists into the kangaroo pocket.

Personally, I thought the softness suited her well. I had chosen her last name because of it – Warners were not supposed to be slender. The crumpled baggie fell to the floor when she stood up and squeezed in front of me.

She took her suitcase from the overhead compartment and padded down the aisle. I moved to the window seat and pressed my head against the window so I could count the trees; against my forehead, the glass felt cool. I only made it to twenty-two when the train picked up enough speed to smear the landscape into strokes of brown and green. I pulled my head away from the window and noticed the reflection of a woman. She was average height with friendly features: round eyes, shoulder-length hair, and an inoffensive nose.

"Mind if I sit here?" she asked, tapping on my shoulder. I felt startled in the same way I imagine I would feel if a television actress reached through the screen at me while I was watching an afternoon program.

BOCCUTI

“Oh, no. Go ahead,” I guessed she was probably in her late twenties. She started to dig through her purse. In yoga pants and a white spandex zip-up she managed to look neither sloppy nor haphazard. I always admired people who could wear loungewear and make it look so intentional. It was a skill I had never acquired but desperately wanted to. She must have been searching for her cell phone because once it was in her hand she sat down. With her palm, she smoothed her hair. I liked the way her strands of hair caught the light. When she noticed me watching, she smiled and I took it as a gracious cue to find something else to do. Remembering my iPod, I fished out the earbuds from my pocket and scrolled through my songs.

Eventually, my eyes wandered over to her lap where her cell phone teetered next to an issue of *People* magazine; the glossy pages reminded me of her hair. She was reading a spread on the latest Boho trend. I didn’t think Boho would work on her. She had a Ralph Lauren look to her that wouldn’t bode well in blousy animal prints, wooden bangles and ornately beaded sandals. Cardigans and clean khakis would suit her better – classic and simple.

“Next stop is BWI. Baltimore Washington International Airport. If BWI is your stop please gather your belongings and prepare to exit at the end of your car where an Amtrak employee is waiting to assist you.”

Hearing this announcement made me appreciate my window seat even more. The train always bulged with passengers after BWI. Behind me, a college-aged girl was flirting with the guy next to her. Back at Trenton they had discovered they went to the same school and had since been bonding over their dissatisfaction with the cafeteria offerings and Gen Ed requirements. Across the aisle, a middle-aged woman forked at the remains of a salad. She had pulled the plastic bowl from a Whole Foods bag a few stations ago and I could tell she felt virtuous compared to her seatmate, a tanned lady with short feathered hair who was on her fourth cup of red wine. I originally thought it was some sort of cranberry juice until she returned from the café car for the third time reeking of alcohol. The scent reminded me of my Uncle Glen at Christmastime. I wondered if he would give me another pair of reindeer socks this year. I’m not sure why someone would think anyone besides an elf might need more than one pair of holiday-themed socks, but that hadn’t stopped my Uncle from gifting me a pair for the last six years.

“Excuse me, but would you mind moving so my wife and I can sit together? We’re newly-weds.”

A man in his late twenties was talking to a boy sitting behind the middle-aged woman. The boy had struck me as mild-mannered when I first noticed him – the seat next to him had been empty since Philadelphia but he had taken careful

BOCCUTI

measure not to take up any of its space while quietly sipping on a can of ginger ale and flipping through an issue of *Popular Mechanics*. The man was looking at him expectantly and had clasped his wife's hand for emphasis. I doubt the boy actually cared whether or not the man and his wife were newlyweds, but he relocated to a seat across the aisle anyway. The newlyweds sat down and I looked away as soon as the wife started nuzzling her head on the man's shoulder.

The woman next to me was talking on her cell phone.

"I'm just not sure he's *the one*, you know?" She was tracing the outline of a slouchy, camel handbag in her magazine.

"He drinks a little too much and I'm not sure how he is with finances, but I could definitely see us being something long-term."

I never understood the logic behind oversized handbags.

"I keep saying to myself, 'Jennifer, you need someone who's mature' but his passion, that's what gets me – God, he's an incredible artist."

There is something off about a woman carrying a swath of fabric four times her width.

"If anything were to happen I would have to wait for him to mature a little bit."

Who could possibly need that much space anyway?

"His wife? Oh she's nice – very sweet. It was a little awkward when I first met her. We weren't letting onto anything but I'm sure she knew. She couldn't have been more cordial towards me."

I turned off the volume of my iPod, making sure to linger on the dial long enough to convince anyone watching I was selecting a new song.

"Well, I don't think he meant for me to meet her. I just happened to run into them at his show. And God, Stacy, he's such a doting husband. He kept rubbing her head and saying 'the doctor says *we* only have two more surgeries.' It was adorable the way he kept referring to them as we. I could really see myself with him, you know? I'm just not sure I could see myself with him for the long-haul," she said as she flipped to the next page of her magazine. It was an article on how to properly accessorize neon hued sportswear.

"Oh, the audition went well. It was so last minute though I had to scramble to learn the monologue. If I get the part I'll probably move to Baltimore." Her thumb fiddled along the silver edge of the phone, searching for the button that would adjust the volume.

"Yeah, I've thought about that. If that happens I'll take it as a sign that Jason and I should..." She paused mid-sentence.

"Oh that's fine Stacy. I'll call you sometime on Tuesday. You're a saint, really. Give the kids my love – they looked adorable in those Halloween pictures you sent to me!" She snapped the

phone shut and started skimming through her magazine. After a few minutes she sighed and looked at me from the corner of her eye.

“You must think I’m awful.”

I wasn’t about to admit to eavesdropping so I feigned surprise.

“I’m sorry, what did you say?” My music had been off for a while but I removed my headphones anyway.

“You must think I’m awful.”

“Why would I think that?”

“You know, the affair.”

In any other situation I would have denied hearing the conversation entirely but her voice sagged in a way that told me she was not only OK with the fact that I had been listening, but felt relieved that she had someone to talk to.

“I only heard bits and pieces, really.”

“I know a married man isn’t exactly ideal but I honestly think I love him.”

I never knew what to do with my eyes during these types of conversations. If I maintained eye contact for too long, she might think I’m crazy but if I avoided eye contact entirely, she might think I’m socially inept. I’m not sure which is worse.

“Don’t you think that if you love someone, you should just go for it?”

“I suppose.”

“This thing with Jason, it could be my only chance at the real deal.”

Before I could answer, the familiar announcement crackled from the speakers.

“Next stop is Union Station. Washington D.C. If Union Station is your stop please gather your belongings and prepare to exit at the end of your car where an Amtrak employee is waiting to assist you.”

“Looks like my stop’s next.” She leaned forward to pick up her purse. Her phone slid onto the floor.

“Shoot.” She crouched her torso over her knees to give her arm more leverage as it groped to find the phone.

“Hey, that’s quite the scar you’ve got on your arm there.” Her head was an inch away from my left arm, which had been taking advantage of the armrest.

“Oh it’s nothing. Just a scar from a biking accident when I was a kid.” I pulled my sleeve over the pinkish ripples that creased my skin. The train slowed. She stood up to collect her duffel bag from the overhead compartment. Before turning toward the aisle, she glanced at my arm and smiled once more.

BOCCUTI

As she walked to the exit I wondered if she would move to Baltimore, if she would end up with Jason, if his wife would die alone. I looked down and noticed the crumpled baggie Katie Claire Warner had left behind. I wondered if she would always feel ashamed by her doughy stomach, if she would force her body to mimic the slight curves of the Hollywood actresses in Jennifer's magazine. I wondered if the college girl and boy would talk to each other after the train ride, if they would tumble into bed together only to feel awkward about the intimacy of their bodies when passing each other around campus. I wondered if the mild-mannered boy would live his life mild-mannered, if one day he would wake up and decide to blow up a shopping mall in the name of everyone who ever took advantage of him. I wondered if the newlyweds would transition happily into married life, if twenty years from now they would stare at each other from across the dinner table, strangers, trying to remember what they had loved about one another in the first place. And I wondered what would happen once I got off the train: if my father would forget my birthday again, if my mother would cover the bruises and scars on her arms with the tattered cardigan I bought her five years ago for Mother's Day, if I would return to the train with more marks of my own. I once read that Japanese folklore attributes earthquakes to the wriggling of a giant catfish, *Namazu*, beneath the Earth's surface. I've always liked the idea of a mythical creature being responsible for all of those cracks and bends.

Amanda Boccuti

My Father's Alvarez Acoustic

He taught himself how to play it
by listening to the radio.

The sounds of Jimmy Paige,
George Harrison,
and Pete Townsend reverberated
in his head

as he balanced it's dreadnought form
on his knobby knees, stained green.

He cut more lawns than he could count
to buy that beautiful hunk of wood:
yellow spruce and mahogany
accented with mother-of-pearl.

His nimble boyish hands
patiently strummed, with tender fingers,
the chords of every song
until the notes began to make sense.

But that was thirty years ago.
Before bands.
Before marriage.
Before kids.

Now it bears battle scars -
from auditions,
from late night gigs at bowling alleys and county fairs.
Scratches on the pickguard
from countless songs, countless shows.

SCOTT

And there's the dent from the time when,
in my excitement
after learning a chord,
I dropped it on the tiled kitchen floor.

He only plays it on the weekends now,
at wine shops, and family get-togethers
a reprieve from the daily grind
of cutting more lawns than he can count.

Leighton Scott

CARAMILLO



Black Dog



My Love
Erika Caramillo

STROBEL

Look, Marie

I.

Look, Marie, at that steady orange line:
the leafcutter ants twisted and twined,
crowned with clefts of green, ambling proudly
back to cold chambers that sluice the Earth,
like the black window screen splicing my view
of their proud parade.

II.

Marie, turn off the television, turn off the stove,
come see these ants all pocked with holes;
or at least it seems—the damn screen won't move
and the window won't open, and these eyes
are whittled by darkness as the night
is laid out in haughty orange folds.

III.

Marie, please, close the laptop, turn off the news;
this was your idea, a fucking second honeymoon
in this splintering cabin scrabbled with brown
that stains the Costa Rican forest like a monstrous
tree spit out of the sky, so here we are, exiled
in this dank wooden cave.

IV.

Marie, I'd go outside but I'm sunken and tired,
and clouds have been gathering
for the last fucking hour, so for now
I'm here at the window in the saddest repose,
with a melting gray face all wizened
with reason, hovering in some purgatory
between these eyes and the ants that are scampering past
in a visceral dance, and you won't turn off
the fucking TV and come over here and sit
next to me.

V.

Marie, they're gone now, don't even bother.
I'll just sit here, stolid, as the sun disappears
and the darkness unfurls thick like a curtain, as a face—
encased in pale jowls and varicose veins—
fades from the window, and the forest goes black,
and the trees disappear—the ants won't be back.

Nathan Strobel

AGARIN



That's a Scratch
Jake Agarín



Technology Will Be The Death of Us
Jake Agarín

SCOTT

Sandy Things

He was dead so what right did his shirt have to go on living? She ripped off buttons tied undoable knots in laces tore off sleeves and shredded ties staining everything with tears. Exhausted by the destruction and the pain she fell asleep on the soggy remnants of what he had left behind. By morning the tears had evaporated and she awoke in the pallid bedroom, the salt like newly fallen snow. She began digging for all she had destroyed collecting notions in glass jars and piling fabric into laundry baskets, the room once again in Technicolor. While she worked she thought about how much pain was sitting on kitchen shelves with only a girl and her umbrella responsible for mankind's brackish rain. She shoveled what was left of her tears into a wheelbarrow and began marching toward the bay. She tipped it over into the surf dissolving her grief in with the loss of the masses, placing the burden on the icy waves.

She rolled the syllables around on her tongue, chewed the words making them come out whole. She regurgitated wisdom and understanding, the starved lost flocking to her. When she was happy the sweetness of her harmonies left them feeling giddy and they poured out onto the streets bubbling into the night. When darkness loomed over her they were left huddled in the booths somehow feeling crowded yet very far away from each other at the same time. On nights like these drinks were on the house, a round of tears for all. The dark nights were every night now, the days of laughter and joy a distant memory. The turnout grew smaller as her pain and loneliness spread like a parasite consuming her life. Fearing contagion they stayed away, content with their own heartache.

He was all over the house stuffed into cookie tins hiding in boxes in the attic and laying on the carpet like lost change. It wasn't long before he left the house drifting alongside her to the bank or peeking out of shopping carts at the grocery store, their drivers oblivious on autopilot, frantic with long lists and long faces. Eventually the shoppers were slowed to the rhythm of soft rock and checkout line beeps, comforted by memories of wonder bread sandwiches and Campbell's soup after a snowball fight. They fantasized about getting lost in leafy forests of lettuce or in the icy tundra of the frozen foods section. Once the sliding doors opened they were back in the real work, pushing their load across asphalt to join the chaos and uncertainty once again. As she turned on the engine she felt her stomach turn in on itself the reality of an empty house and another dinner alone hitting her like a head on collision.

SCOTT

As she walked through the park the next day she saw his shredded ties woven into birds' nests. As she passed the cafe an old man wiping his brow caught her eye, the initials she embroidered on the handkerchief barely visible but still there. She wanted to scream, Leave me alone! You're gone so stay gone! Instead she silently pleaded, Come back, please come back. She wanted to gather every bit of him up and hold it all until the dirty gloves became his hands holding her tight and the static from his old radio became his voice saying, I'm sorry, I'll never let go of you again. A million 11:11s turned to 11:12s, shooting stars streaked across the sky and hundreds of birthday candles were blown out but the gloves were never more than gloves and eventually the radio went silent.

Diana Scott

GEISSLER



Orchid
Genine Geissler



The Frog Prince
Clarissa Gotsch

THORNE

Saxony's Second Sonnet

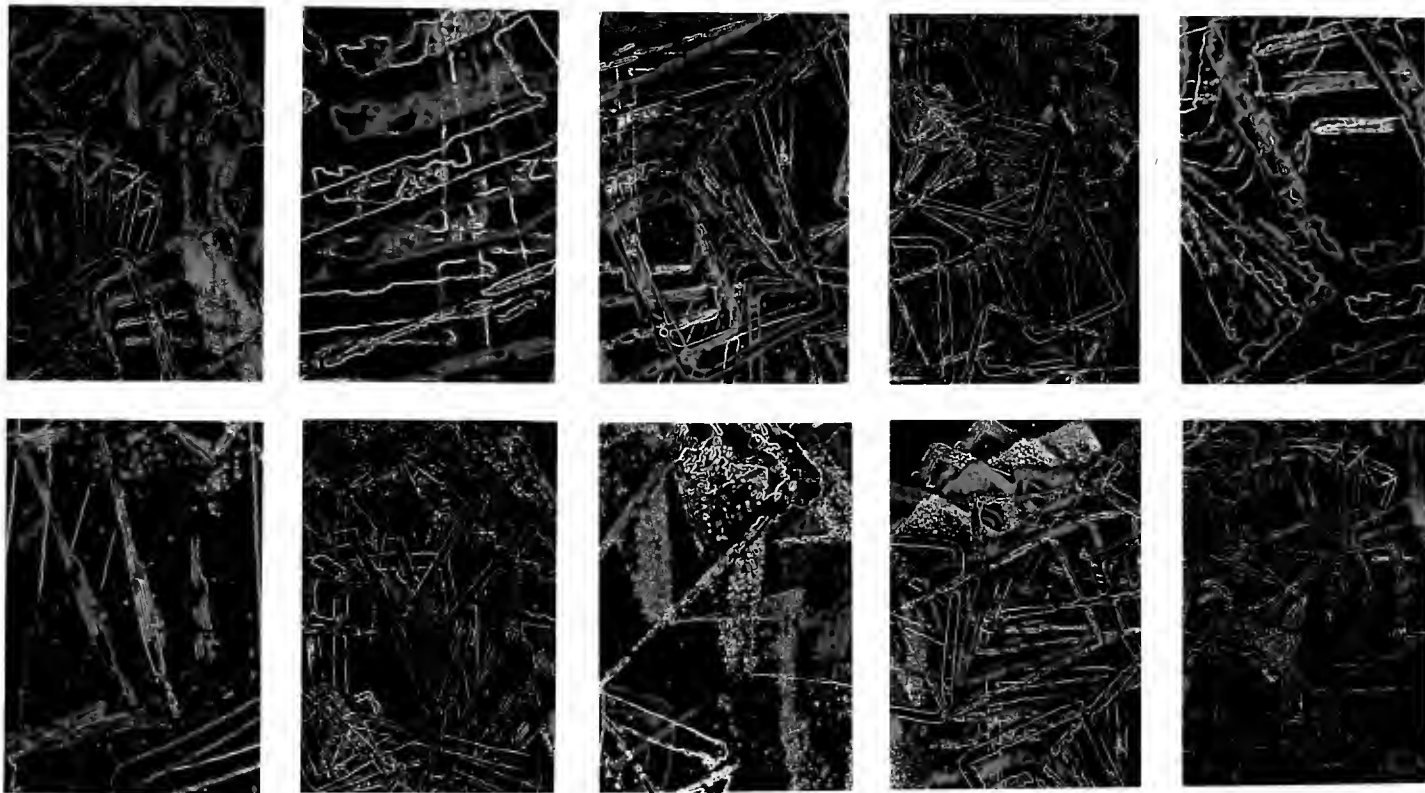
She drank me in
And began joking and choking me down
When she halted
On her spiral stare
Of browns and black
And her toes and colons
Slipped through cracks
Like knives
To strip her flesh in ribbons
And show her meat
And displayed her as cattle
With her ovaries strung up
Like cello strings
Set to be plucked and pulled
And played upon.
And all those different hands
Produced the same thing.
And her eyes
Connected mine like wire coated wine
In the pale red spotlight
Of jazz and blues
And poems scrawled around and through
Forgotten tunes
So I could feel
Every pen scratch
Dig into my flesh
Until there's nothing
But sockets gaping and remaining
Through and through
Only to fester and make sure my nerves
Were shot to ruin
Just so she'll expunge me
With the bile

THORNE

And words
And woods to hide it all in.
The peace.
Then normalcy.

Neil Thorne

MATHUSA



Mindless
Molly Mathusa



Splash of Color

Kyle Lefler

ORSINI

The Trinity

It was a miracle in a sprig of parsley. The herb
passed through parched lips, tangy as grass, and as fresh.
Your youthful mouth, made old by typhoid, swallowed water weakly.
Your mother kept the pitcher beside the home's only featherbed.

Your mother tried to kill you once, you know. She made it
no secret- she had seven daughters, and did not desire an eighth.
She tried many things. They said if she ate raw eggs it would kill
you- one yolk would push another out of the belly. But you lived,
and you kept a baby chick, *Sioccono*, as a childhood pet.

That night you dreamt of a flowering tree, standing stark among the
olive orchards in the rural landscape. You know this place well-
when the Americans dropped their bombs, you were thrown
straight out, legs sprawling under modest dress, apron almost
empty of cherries. This time you know better than to climb.

You see *Zia Mela* there, from the afternoon. She had burst through the
door, her apron full of herbs, her eyes wild and heavenward. "I have seen
il Santo dei Santi." She tells of a farmer down the mountain who, as he
emerged from his bomb shelter, saw the Father and Son in his parsley patch.
Your mother had no medicine, for doctors were rare in wartime.

So she fed you the parsley, her unwanted baby girl. And the next morning,
the fever was down. You snapped awake to blinding sunshine
and the astonished faces of your mother and aunt.

Lauren Orsini

BOWER



The Burial
Ben Bower

IN APPRECIATION

We would like to extend our gratitude to the following people who have helped make Aubade what it is today:

First, we would like to thank Professor Claudia Emerson. As our faculty sponsor, Professor Emerson never hesitated to help, whether it was scheduling events or offering her advice about line breaks and word choices. This would have been an impossible task without her.

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And finally, to everyone who wrote a poem, took a picture or painted a painting, wrote that short story and then had the courage to submit it—without your talent and creativity this magazine would not exist. Thank you to all of the student staff who took so much time out of their busy schedules to read and go through the editing process. We can't wait to do it again next year!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Writing this letter is bittersweet. On the one hand, it has been an incredible year for Aubade. We had our first successful biannual publication and the interest in the magazine has grown across campus. Our goal this semester was to involve more communities on campus and we hope that the relationships we formed this semester will continue to grow. On the other hand, I know that I will be passing the torch to the next generation of Aubade editors, the next group to bring their own vision and ideas to the publication of the magazine. It has been an unbelievable experience and I have learned so much; I know that I will miss everything about putting this magazine together. I also know that the next group of editors are an amazing group that will put their own spin on the magazine. They're going to put out a great magazine next year, and I can't wait to see what they do with it.

Over the past three years, I've been continually impressed with the creativity that is thriving on our campus. In this edition of the magazine, you will find many places that are familiar to you. There is a poem and a short story about the same train ride up the east coast, a train ride many of us (including myself) are all-too familiar with. There are poems and short stories that put a completely different spin on the way we look at relationships. Many of the pieces deal with grief. Editions like this one are always my favorite—the kind that include pieces from all over campus, all over the world, and include every kind of emotion. The pieces in Aubade, Spring 2009, will make you cry and laugh, it will take you to Egypt and London, and that's just what we were looking for.

I'm so pleased to have been a part of this magazine. I think all of the staff has grown so much through the work we have done. Be on a look out, because I know what they're going to put forward next year will be incredible!

Leslie Fannon, Editor-in-Chief

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